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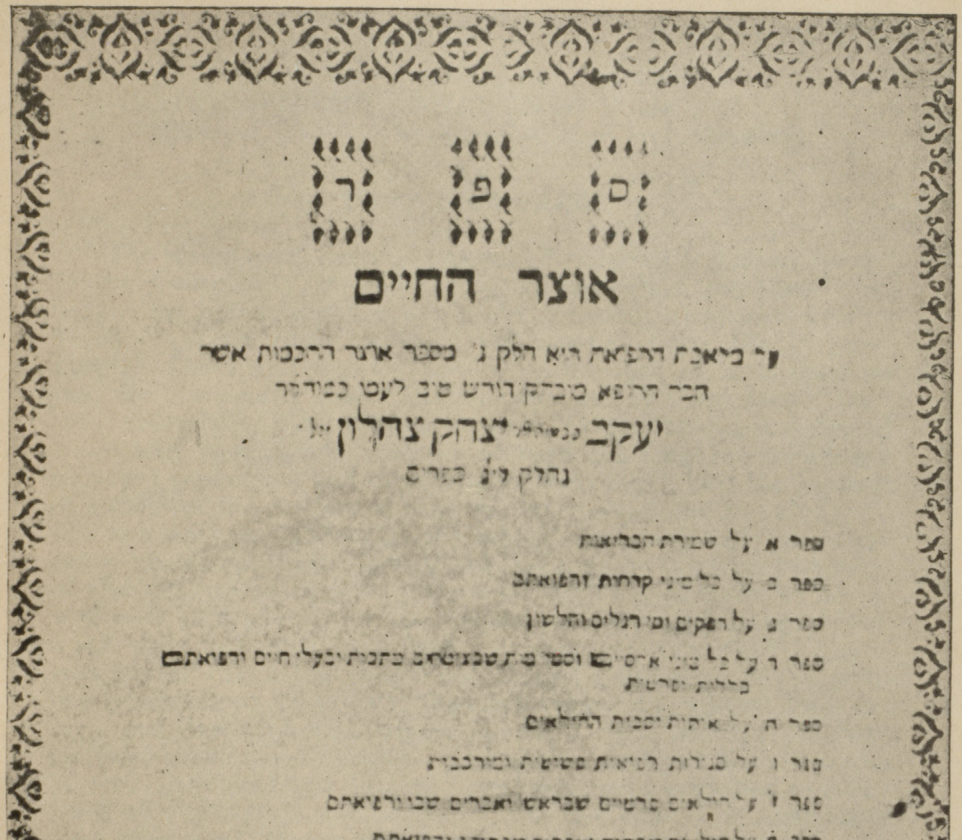
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ספר

אוצר החיים

על מלאכת הרפואה הוא חלק ג' מספר אוצר החכמות אשר
חבר הרופא מובהק דורש טוב לעמו כמוהר"ר
יעקב בכמהר"ר יצחק צהלון ז"ל
נחלק לי"ג ספרים

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ספר ב' על כל מיני קדחות ורפואתם
ספר ג' על הדפקים ומי רגלים והלשון
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ספר י"ג דרושים רוחניים על חולאי הנפש דומים לחלאים גופניים הנ"ל

בויניציאה

בשנת [illegible] הג'יל

IN VENETIA, M.DC.LXXXIII.
Nella Stamparia Vendramina.
Con Licenza de' Superiori.

Title page of Zahalon's "Ozar ha-Hayyim. (Size 12x8 in.) in the possession of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York City.

(12)

JACOB ZAHALON of Rome
Medieval Rabbi, Physician, Author and Moralist.

By
Harry Friedenwald*

The seventeenth century was one of suffering and decay for the Jewish Community of Rome. Harsh, restrictive measures were heaped up and as a consequence the economic condition steadily declined. Rigid rules governed the closing of the Ghetto gates (1603). Cruel and unjust taxes were imposed in such measure that the community found itself unable to pay them (1604, 1627, 1629, 1632, 1634, 1635, 1641, 1649, 1650, 1658). Spiritual suffering was added to economic distress through the frequent occurrence of forced conversion and the decree of the Church that the baptism of a child at the request of a nurse but without the knowledge of the parents was valid, a decree which was confirmed again and again. It was only in 1639 that the law forbade the forced baptism of children under seven. Jews were declared as unfit to act as witnesses in trials where the disputants were Christians (1611). They were forbidden to engage Christian servants (1617) and it was decreed that a Jew should not instruct a Christian or *vice versa* in any science or art (1620). The law concerning special dress for Jews and Jewesses was carried out with rigor and the penalties for disobedience were severe. The annual carnival was disgraced by races of "naked and limping Jews" who were subjected to every form of humiliation and abuse; it was not until 1667 that these were abrogated, for an added new tax upon the community. In addition to the suffering imposed upon the community by their masters there was also great distress from other causes. The Tiber frequently rose above its banks and flooded the Jewish quarter (1606, 1628, 1637, 1647, 1660, etc.). The damage to the Ghetto was severe and added greatly to its impoverishment. There were also periods of great famine and of the frightful plague. During the plague of 1656, to which we shall refer below, we learn that the Jewish Community of Rome numbered only 4,127 souls, but of these 2,624 were so poor that they required support from the community.

Concerning the status of medical practice at this period it is only necessary to mention that the old Church laws were strictly enforced. Decrees were issued (1615 and 1618) which forbade Jewish physicians to prepare medicine for Christians, or even to treat them in company with Christian physicians, the penalty being 25 scudi, to be paid by the Jewish physicians as well as by the Christian patient. The decree likewise forbade Christian physicians from serving the Jewish community except by special papal permission.

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*The writer is under obligations to Professor Alex. Marx, of New York, and to Dr. E. N. Rabinowitz, of Baltimore, for help in the preparation of this paper.

The foregoing* will help us to picture the condition in Rome into which Jacob, the son of Isaac Zahalon, was born in 1630, and in which he spent the greater portion of his life. He was descended from an old Roman family. As he grew up he became a student equally of Jewish learning and of medicine and he obtained his degree "artium ac medicinae doctor" from the University of Rome. The opportunity to apply his medical knowledge soon came to him during the great plague of 1656. Jacob combined the duties of Rabbi† with the practice of medicine, thus following in the line of Rabbi-physicians who distinguished themselves in the middle ages and especially in Italy. Even during the time of the plague he preached public sermons and as the synagogues were closed he spoke from an open window to those gathered in the street. He was regularly engaged by the community as preacher and teacher. In 1680 he left Rome to make his home in Ferrara. Here he became the Rabbi and continued in this service until his death in 1693.

Zahalon was a voluminous writer and his works embraced not only medical but also homiletical, philosophical and rabbinical commentaries. His "Ozar ha-Hayyim" is a medical work which was published in Venice in 1683.‡ (See accompanying photograph of title page).

In this book he describes conditions during the plague in the following quaint manner:

"In 5416 (1656) in the month of June, a disease called morbilli broke out among the children; most of them died. Afterwards adults became ill with blotches on the skin called petechiae, and in three days they were dead. It appeared three months earlier among the Gentiles than among the Jews; it also came to an end earlier among the Gentiles. The Jews were forbidden to leave the Ghetto and enter the city, as was their custom. Two officers were sent to the Ghetto to prepare a suitable place for a "Lazaretto," where the sick could be placed so that they were separated from the healthy and thus prevent the spread of the epidemic. They ordered that the place selected for this should be the houses on the street along the river near the gate of the Ghetto, known as the Gate of the Bridge, where they should be confined until cured. They appointed an officer, Monsignor Negroni, who came twice a day to look after the needs of the community and to enforce rigid isolation at a great penalty; they set up gallows near the gate to hang anyone transgressing these orders. They appointed a Gentile physician, who remained confined in the Ghetto, and who ordered everyone affected to be brought to the "Lazaretto." For

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*For details see Vogelstein & Rieger, Geschichte der Juden in Rom, Vol. II, pp. 189-224.

†Similar conditions occurred occasionally in the Christian world. Lurcz, who was Professor of Medicine at the University of Vienna, was at the same time a priest. See Puschmann, Gesch. Med. Unterrichts, Leipzig 1889, pp. 236.

‡Vogelstein & Rieger, Vol. II., pp. 268.

the care of the patients in the "Lazaretto" there were resident there the physician Samuel Gabbai, (may the Lord preserve him!) and his father Cirocico, who died, while the son recovered. The lazarette houses were divided into three parts, to each of which one Jewish physician was appointed. . . .

"Blessed be the Lord who did kindness to me and preserved me and saved me in order to carry out His will. I raise the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Praises be given to the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever.

"At that time it occurred to me that a certain patient whose name was Sabbatai Cohen (of blessed memory) became ill with fever. He had a swelling in the groin and I did not consider it a bubo. When he died I stated that he did not die of the plague, but the Gentile physician said that he died of the plague because he saw the swelling in the groin, which I regarded as a hernia of the intestines. There was therefore great difference of opinion as to the closing up of the house, as was done when one died of the disease. They brought the body to the Gentile physician, opened it, and found that it was as I had said and not a bubo, as the Gentile physician had maintained, and I was saved. Blessed be He who redeems and saves!

"This was the procedure. The Jewish physician visited the sick and if he saw any signs of the disease, a black "carbuncle" or a bubo in the groin with fever or other serious symptoms, especially if the tongue was white as snow, he would call the Gentile physician to examine the patient; the latter would order that they take the patient and his bed to the lazarette, to Samuel Gabbai,— or the patient might remain home and be treated there.

"When the physician visited the sick it was customary that he take in his hand a large torch of tar, burning it night and day to purify the air for his protection, *and in his mouth he had theriac. With God's help, it also aided me greatly that on my left arm I placed a seton, from which there flowed much blood and bad pus.

"In the nine months during which this epidemic lasted there died, both young and old, about 800; among them was the young scholar, expert in the science of surgery, Isaac Zahalon, my father's brother's son of blessed memory. . . .

"They brought the dead to the river in small boats and carried the bodies to the cemetery outside the city to a place called Piano dei divisori. . . .

"Since the people were not able to go to synagogue, on Sabbath Toledoth (Kislev 2, 5417) I, Jacob Zahalon, preached in Catalana street, from the window in the corner house of David Gatigno, to the people (may God preserve them!) standing in the street. At another time I preached in Toscana Street, from the window of the house of Judah Gatigno (of blessed memory), the people standing

*Is it possible that the vapor of the burning tar impregnating his clothes made the doctor an undesirable host for fleas and thus afforded real protection?

in the street to listen to the sermon. In other streets scholars would preach from the windows of their houses.

"None were permitted to go out on the street save physicians, except at certain times, to get food; at night no one was allowed to leave his house. The guards patrolled the city and if they found anyone they would put him into a prison appointed for that purpose.

"After nine months the Holy One (blessed be He), remembered His people because of the merit of their forefathers and the disease came to an end and they were well and the gates were opened and Israel returned to the synagogues to pray as in former times. Give thanks and praise to God on high, whose kindness never ceases and whose mercy never ends!"

Judging from his own expressions, Zahalon was convinced that his book supplied a great need. "In some towns," he tells us, "there are no physicians, but there is a scholar who is able to understand and to study closely and to seek cures for the sick in this book. Where the physician lives far from town and there is no time to be lost till he arrives, or again where several physicians visit a sick man and differ as to their treatment, the learned man can inform himself as to the valid and expert judgment of this book. This book will likewise be of benefit to physicians themselves, who will find a "table spread" for them without expounding differences of opinion at great length, as is the prevalent method of books of medicine. I have only given the most proper, accepted and well-tried methods of cure. Furthermore, this book will be of benefit to the poor who are unable to pay the fees of a physician. He will easily learn the treatment of his disease in this book. . . I shall go into detail concerning the more common diseases and I shall be brief in regard to others. . . .

"I shall append a practical case of each disease from my own practice or that of one of my colleagues explaining how the patient was cured. It inspires the invalid with hope that someone else was afflicted with the same disease and was cured." . . . .

In the introduction to the Ozar ha-Hayyim, Zahalon discusses the religious question whether it is permissible and proper to treat a sick person with medicine. He refers to the authority of Maimonides who taught that "when a man is hungry and partakes of food for the purpose of curing himself of hunger" it does not indicate that he thereby loses faith and no longer places confidence in his God. . . . Just as we thank God at our meals because he has provided us with the means to satisfy us and to relieve our hunger so that we remain alive, so also let us thank God that he has brought into being the drugs wherewith we may be cured from diseases." . . .

Zahalon adds that "just as it is not right for the healthy man when he has a desire to eat or drink, to say, if life has been decreed for me, I shall live (without food) and if death is decreed, I shall die, for a man who does this is guilty of taking his own life . . . so

likewise the sick man who refuses to take medicine saying, if life is decreed for me, I shall live; if death is decreed, I shall die, is also guilty of taking his own life." . . . . Zahalon then gives all the additional grounds that are found in the Bible, in the Mishna, the Gemorra and the Midrash which sustain this argument.* But what is most interesting is the emphasis he lays upon the ethical side of medical practice. He quotes the author of Olath Shabbath† who says "a physician must possess these requirements in order to secure the patient's confidence: (1) He must be a respected man of good appearance, who will find favor in the eyes of all the people; the patient will trust him if he is a God-fearing man and a man of good stock. (2) He must be learned in the science of medicine. (3) He must be a man of experience in his work. (4) He must possess the power of persuasion, smooth speech, which will appease the sick person. "His words have upholden him that was falling." (Job 4.4) . . . Zahalon next enumerates the admirable aphorisms of medical conduct, 77 in number, which had been published by the learned physician Abraham Zacutus Lusitanus (1575-1642) of blessed memory in his voluminous work *De Medicorum Principum Historia.* To this Zahalon adds. . . . "It is advisable that the physician before beginning his practice should for a long time accompany a skilled physician in his visits to the sick. What he hears his teacher say concerning the treatment he should make note of as soon as he comes home and should also study carefully the medical books on the subject of the disease. If he is in doubt about anything he should inquire from other physicians or from other books in order to clear up the points in doubt. . . . . Even if the disease is serious, the physician should speak encouraging words to the patient. . . . If he is told about a cure on the authority of another physician, he should not scorn it. If another physician is with him (in the case) he should not disregard his opinions if they are good and if they are not he should not state it openly to others, but privately to his colleague. . . . When the patient is cured, the physician should not prolong his visits when there is no necessity.

"He should give direction how the patient should conduct himself so that the disease should not return and that he give praises to the Holy One blessed be He, the merciful physician, who cured him. . . . The physician should not sell the drugs himself, but the patient should send to the druggist. . . . And before he prescribes he should seek God to instruct him what is proper for a sick man. Should he find that the patient is dangerously ill, he should inform his relatives, so that if he dies, they do not slander him, but also that they make every effort to cure him and that they do not raise objections to the expense. When the physician visits women

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*The relation of the Jews and of Judaism to the Medical Art. American Medicine, September, 1917.

†Joel Ibn Shu'aib, Rabbi, preacher, and commentator of the fifteenth century; born in Aragon. The book referred to was written in 1469. It was published in Venice, 1557.

he should be modest, and should not follow the evil thoughts of his heart. . . . And he should not accept a fee from the poor nor from relatives and close friends; and should not accept a fee for his services on holidays and Sabbaths. Others permit this to be done by including it in the general charge for the week days. If he sees that a friend desires to remunerate him daily in order not to be obliged to give him an expensive present at the end or in order that he may be at liberty to call him again, he may take a fee. Although the physician who visits the sick is performing a religious duty and it is not fitting that he receive pay for this, nevertheless, the Rabbis permitted it as remuneration for the time spent just as they permitted teachers who teach the Torah to receive pay in order that they may be able to live by their profession." . . . .

In conclusion Zahalon urges that "the physician should recite at least once a week the 'Physician's Prayer,' which he composed and published in the 'Sepher Margaliyyot Tobot," printed in Venice.

In his "Margaliyyot Tobot" (Precious Pearls), Zahalon abridged Bahya's "Duties of the Heart" and interspersed it with prayers, etc.; one of these is a prayer for the physician just referred to.* It is permeated by the deepest piety; Zahalon looks upon the physician as the agent carrying out divine purpose; he sets the highest ethical standards for him in his service of mercy and kindness and sympathy for his fellowman:

The Physician's Prayer.

"Lord of the Universe! Thou, alone hast made the Heavens and the Heavens of Heavens and all their hosts, the earth and all that is upon it, the seas and all that is within them. Thou givest life to all and sustenance to all. The hosts of Heaven bow to Thee and there is neither among those on high nor among those underneath anyone who would tell Thee what to do. Thou hast formed man from the dust of the ground. Thou hast breathed the spirit of life within his nostrils. Thou hast caused him to rule over the works of Thy hand. Everything Thou hast placed under his feet. For his sake thou has created all. If he meritorously performs the will of his Master, his hand ruleth over all things; if not, the hand of all is upon him.

"Thou dost punish him with afflictions and ailments. He is chastened also with pain on his bed and all his bones grow stiff. His flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen and his bones corrode to unsightliness. His soul draweth near unto the pit and his life to the destroyers. (Job 19, 21, 22, 33). But if he repents completely before Thee, Thou art pleased with him and Thou wilt cure him as it is written: 'He sent His word and healed them and delivered them from their graves.' (Ps. 107:20). For Thou art the merciful and faithful healer, as it is written: 'I have wounded and

*The reader will be reminded of the interesting prayer of the physician often, but erroneously ascribed to a Jewish physician of the twelfth century or to Maimonides. For an account of the prayer see the writer's paper: "The Ethics of the Practice of Medicine from the Jewish Point of View," Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin, Aug., 1917, pp. 260.

I heal.' (Deut. 32:39), in order to make known to all the denizens of the world that Thou art the healer and unto Thee is the power and the glory. From Thy established habitation Thou lookest down upon all the inhabitants of the earth. For their special benefit, hast Thou created in Thy world many drugs by which to cure the sons of man and in Thy wisdom Thou hast commanded them to cure one another by means of these medicines, as it is written: 'He shall cause him to be thoroughly healed.' (Ex. 21:19).

"Since, therefore, Thou hast favored me with kindness and hast crowned me with honor and glory and Thou hast made me worthy of knowing a bit of the science of medicine, therefore I wish to perform Thy desire, O Lord. . . I am minded to busy myself with the practice of medicine in Thy Holy Name and through Thy assistance; "that Thou mayest be justified when Thou speakest and be in right when Thou judgest.' (Ps. 51:6), for Thou art the physician, not I. I am but as the clay in the potter's hand, in the hand of the creator of all things and as the instrument through which Thou curest Thy creatures. I do not rely upon my wisdom, nor do I place my trust in the drugs and herbs and medicaments which Thou has created, for they are but the means to fulfill Thy will and to proclaim Thy greatness and Thy providence. Since the practice of medicine is fraught with perils, and as I am a man of folly and of no understanding, fearing lest I grope at noonday as the blind grope in the dark, therefore do I cling to the fringes of Thy kindness and do follow Thee; in the light of Thy countenance will I walk and in Thy light will I behold light, 'for Thou dost light my lamp; Lord my God doth lighten my darkness' (Ps. 18:29). Therefore, may it be Thy will, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, to endow me with good understanding . . and to bestow upon me knowledge and insight and to cause the eyes of my understanding to shine so that I may discern and diagnose the ailment of the body thoroughly and correctly in all the cases that come to me; instruct me as to the drugs suitable to each one in accordance with his needs and in accordance with the proper time when they are fit, so that I may not err in my acts or in my words, 'lest my enemies see and rejoice.' (Prov. 24:17). Support me that I do not stumble and that no mishap occur through my hand. Recompense me with Thy many kindnesses for to do kindnesses have I entered into the profession of medicine, to save the lives of Thy people Israel. Assist me and protect me from insult and shame. . . . If there come to me any patient whose allotted time is about to end and whose affliction is heavy, may it be Thy will that I cause not the hastening of his death (God forbid) even by one second. Teach me to administer drugs so as to retain his soul within him until his fated hour arrives. And if he die may it be Thy will that his friends, his companions and the members of his family do not accuse me and that they do not suspect me of being the cause of his death, but that they accept it as the just decree of God. . . . of the King in Whose hand is the life of all living and the spirit of all flesh. But if his appointed

time has not arrived and Thou art casting him down with pains because of Thy mercy in order that he repent completely before Thee for Thou hast 'no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live' (Ex. 33:11), may it then be Thy will that Thou causest this merit to fall to my lot and that Thou instructest me what I shall say in order to bring him to repentance and to accept his affliction with love for Thee so that it may be an atonement for all his transgressions; and that through me Thou sendest forth Thy command and cure and that thereby I shall be beloved on high, and honored below.

"Save me from hate and strife. Let me not be envious of others, and may others not envy me. Establish between me and other physicians love, brotherhood, peace and good fellowship. Let me not be put to shame nor disgrace before them, but let me be respected by them. Make me wiser than my enemies. May my head be exalted above my enemies round about me because of my wisdom and the knowledge which my lips may utter clearly, so that I may become an example and model to them and may there be none to utter an evil word against me or my deeds; and if perchance such evil word be spoken let no one give it credence. Let not my colleagues err and me rejoice. If, however, they do evil in their work, may it be Thy will to place a muzzle to my mouth and let me not reveal their wrongdoing, but may I have the merit to repair what they have injured. Let me find grace and favor and kindness in Thy eyes and in the eyes of all who see me and hear me so that they do what I order for a patient if the treatment is proper; but if the treatment is not proper then harden their hearts that do not do it; but let them not make it widely known lest (God forbid) I be disgraced O Lord, God of the spirit of all flesh!

"I ask one favor of Thee, that Thou give strength to my memory so that when I go to visit a patient, Thou make known to me at once which cure will benefit him, whether I have studied it or not. I supplicate Thee, Cause of all Causes, that Thou cause the chain of circumstances to act in such manner that Thou bringest into my hands the medical book in which I may study his treatment or that I may listen to an argument between physicians that will teach me to know his cure; for Thou art the one who brings about the succession of causes in Thy Universe, as it is written: 'And they are turned around about His guidance, that they may do whatsoever He commandeth them upon the face of the habitable world.' (Job 37:12). I pray Thee, O Lord, that Thou bring upon me merit in this world and not demerit (May God forbid!) Do not cause that any evil thing be found in my hand. Let no corruption come from me, so that I should cause any man's death nor even the loss of his limbs, neither willingly with intent nor unwillingly without intent; let me not be included in the category of 'the best physicians are fit for Gehenna.' (Mishna Kiddushin IV, 14). 'Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with men of blood.' (Ps. 26:9).

"But for the merit which Thou mayest bring to me in that I

may preserve lives of Israel, Thy people, whom Thou wilt save from death through me, grant that I may deserve to walk about this world in the pleasure of beholding the good of Thy chosen ones, rejoicing in the joy of Thy people, of glorying in Thy inheritance. May my eyes see Jerusalem, the peaceful habitation. May I walk before the Lord in the land of the living. Let not Satan attach himself to the work of my hand, for to purify and to cleanse have I come!

"My God, deliver me from the hand of the wicked, from the palm of the pervertor and oppressor and place me not in his hand even for one moment lest he entice me to practice wantonness (God forbid!) to administer a poison or drug to injure some man or some pregnant woman. (God forbid!) If he try to entice me, meet him, humiliate him, deliver my soul from him. 'O Lord, I am oppressed, be Thou my surety.' (Isaiah 38:14), for Thou art my hope, O Lord God, my trust since my youth. Cleanse my mind and purify my thoughts that I think no evil about any woman, whether virgin or wife, when I visit her that I do not go about after my own heart and my own eyes.' (Num. 15:39). Save me from all injury, disease and infirmity. . . . 'May the sun not smite me by day nor the moon by night.' (Ps. 121:6).

"I pray, O Thou Master of kindness and mercy, open my eyes that I may discover the secrets of Thy wonderful deeds and that I may know the peculiar curative powers which Thou hast placed in herbs and minerals, in seeds and flowers, in roots and leaves, in wood and fruit, in wines and oils, in waters and in other liquids, in living organisms which are in the heavens above and in the waters under the earth, in simple and in composite structures and that through them I shall tell of Thy might to all generations to whom Thy greatness shall come. May it be Thy will to give Thy blessing to all the works of my hand and to recompense which is given me against my will so that I may look upon it as an omen of good and that I may apply it to good and righteous purposes before Thee, and to magnify and glorify Thy law. And may my sustenance and that of children and children's children come from Thy hands and not from the hands of men of flesh and blood, and may it be in abundance so that I be not forced to take anything from the poor and the sick but, on the contrary, that I may be able to give unto them what Thou hast bestowed upon me, for from Thee come all things and from Thy hands I return to Thee. Endow me well that I succeed and prosper in all that I do, and especially in the work of healing do Thou magnify Thy kindness so that patients call me to whom cure is possible and who may be cured completely through me. And let those not call me who are incurable and whose illness is fatal because Thou hast decreed that they may not be cured. 'Let my soul not come unto their council; unto their assembly let my glory not be united.' (Gen. 49:6). If people consult me because of my knowledge let not the foot of pride overtake me, but let my soul be 'like a weaned child with

his mother.' (Ps. 131:2). May no evil desire nor evil eye have power over me. Let me not be brought into temptation or shame. Save me from the reflection of sin, and transgression and iniquity, now and forever, and clothe my soul with glorious raiment, the crown of glory of good morals, as is becoming to one who finds grace in Thy eyes. Lend strength to all my senses so that they may tell the truth in everything which is brought before them, that I may not be mistaken in any one of them, neither in taste, smell, sight, hearing nor touch, let them tell me concerning what is positive that it is positive, what is negative, negative, what is bitter, bitter, of what is sweet, sweet, so that no injury result to any of my patients because of the weakness of my perceptions. Strengthen likewise the power of speech of the patient and the vigor of his understanding and his memory so that he tell me the truth as to the causes of his ailment and no falsehood in regard to them lest I, also, be led into error and thus fail to understand the causes of his disease from his words and from the symptoms of his disease; let me be fit and learn to prognosticate correctly to the patient in order that my words and warnings may be verified and my injunctions observed. 'Uphold me according unto Thy word, that I may live; and put me not to shame in my hope.' (Ps. 119:116). Do not destroy hope from out my heart; do not incline me to do evil; do not hide Thyself from my supplications; be gracious unto me and answer me; hearken unto my prayer. Indeed Thou hearkenest unto my prayer and I must give thanks for everything and sing Hallelujahs and praise Thy name, for goodness is in store for Thy saints! May I increase in greatness and mayest Thou comfort me! May these words which I have supplicated to the Lord come to pass, etc."

Zahalon was an able physician. This is shown by his writings. He was a distinguished scholar and author in various fields of religious literature; he was regarded as "one of three most learned men of his generation."* He was one of the many Rabbi-physicians who shed lustre upon both professions. He rises to yet greater heights when we consider the times in which he lived, the oppression which his community suffered.

The type of physician which was represented so spendidly in Jacob Zahalon has died out; it was a type often represented among the Jews. We may still admire and set up as an ideal the physician who looks upon his medical service as "a religious obligation," who regards himself as the agent of divine mercy and aid to his suffering brethren, and who in his work strives to meet this great obligation!

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*Jewish Encyc.

BULLETIN

OF THE

MEDICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

EDITED BY

JOHN RUHRÄH, M. D. MISS M. C. NOYES

VOL. VIII. JULY, 1918. No. 1.

THE ESSENTIALS FOR A SMALL LIBRARY.

So many inquiries have been received at the Exchange as to the best necessary material to be procured in the establishment of a medical library, that suggestions are asked from each member as to what they consider essential. We should like to print this list in the October issue of the BULLETIN that it may serve as a guide to future inquirers.

It should be borne in mind that the library is a small one without much money to spend, and the aim is to spend what little there is in the best possible manner. In the first place as a starting point there must be certain works of reference, and these are more or less expensive. Suggestions as to those that have been found most useful will be most welcome. A second feature of the modern medical library is the journal list. The number of journals that a small library can afford to subscribe to is necessarily limited. Small libraries will vary in the number which they can afford so that it is important to have lists of ten, fifteen, twenty-five or thirty-five. These may be so arranged that on any list the first ten will represent those where a library could only get ten, and so on. The other three features of a library will be first, the most important journal sets to buy or to start on with a view of completing them; secondly, what classics are most useful and often consulted; and lastly, what monographs and text-books are essential.

This subject is one of great importance and one in which we are particularly anxious to issue a more or less authoritative statement, and we will appreciate greatly the cooperation of those who are in a position to know. It is so easy for a Library Committee, new to the work, to spend money foolishly; even experienced committees frequently go astray, usually from a lack of the full knowledge of the contributions that have been made on any given subject. We trust that this appeal will not pass unnoticed.

WAR REVIEW OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

A most valuable contribution to war literature is being published by the Government, and we have been assured that all medical libraries will be put on the mailing list for same. The list of our members has been sent to the Department, and if you do not receive the publication, beginning with the June issue, it will be furnished you. When the publication was first undertaken the edition was very limited, and was sent to the Army only, but we understand a reprint of this edition has been made which may be procured, and that the March, April and May numbers may be obtained from the Superintendent of Public Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., if ten cents for each copy be enclosed with the order.

SURGICAL CLINICS AND CLINICAL REPORTS OF LEWIS STEPHEN PILCHER.

The Library of the Medical Society of the County of Kings has a number of copies of the following publication available for medical libraries wishing a copy, "Surgical Clinics and Clinical Reports in Honor of Lewis Stephen Pilcher, Published by the Medical Society of the County of Kings, N. Y., 1917." 108 pp., pl. 8vo. Bound. The book wrapped for mailing will weigh not more than two pounds and the amount of postage to cover forwarding from Brooklyn, N. Y., to the zone from which the request is made should be sent. While the title page reads "Published by the Medical Society of the County of Kings" the book was published and distributed privately before these extra copies were turned over to them. Only about a dozen of the larger medical libraries have received it.

WANTS.

Kindly notify the manager of the Exchange if you can supply any of the following:

Annals of Surgery, v. 2, 1885, nos. 1-6, 9, 11, 12.
Annals of Surgery, v. 5, 1887, nos. 1, 4-12.
Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics, v. 1-7, 1905-1908.
Godman, John D. Any of the works of this author.

RANDOM NOTES ON BOOKS OF INTEREST.

By
John Ruhräh.

Some years ago, in 1910, C. G. Griffinhoofe, of St. Johns' College, Cambridge, published a new volume of a number of celebrated Cambridge men, in which he has made an attempt to furnish an account in a chronological connected order of Cambridge men who had become famous. Among those in the goodly company is John Caius, 1510-1573, who was at Gonville Hall in 1529, and was for many years President of the Royal College of Physicians, and was consulted by King Edward and Queens Mary and Eliazbeth. He finally became the Master of Gonville Hall, which he changed into Caius and Gonville College. Stephen Perse, who was reported as a prosperous physician, and who made money by his profession and did good with it, was also of Gonville Hall and Caius College, as was William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood. From the same college came Francis Glisson; whose treatise on Rickets is one of the classics of medicine. It is curious that the first four medical men should have all come from the same college. Thomas Wharton obtained great renown as an anatomist. He was placed at Pembroke College in 1638. In 1698 John Addenbrooke was matriculated at St. Catherine's. William Heberden came to St. John's in 1724, and lectured in the University before removing to London. The Epitome of the Diseases of Children, his little book on pediatrics, was a great treatise. Neither of these contributions, however, are mentioned by the author of Celebrated Cambridge Men. Cambridge also claims Thomas Young, who was in Emmanuel College. He was a man of most unusual attainments both in languages and science, his theory of light and his work on refraction being perhaps his greatest contribution; but more popularly known as the one who rendered possible the translation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics through his reading of the characters on the Rosetta stone. Sir Michael Foster, though not originally a Cambridge man, was elected Professor of Physiology of the University in 1853. Only nine medical men out of two hundred and fifty-five of those thought worthy to be justly famous came out of Cambridge, but the quality of the names perhaps makes up for the number.

Theophrastus von Hohenheim, better known as Paracelsus, is generally conceded to be one of the most interesting figures in the whole history of medicine. To Sudhoff we owe the careful study into his writings. Strunz has also made careful studies, and has presented him in a more favorable light than which he had previously been pictured. A sympathetic study of Paracelsus is one by Anna M. Stoddart, a new and cheaper edition of which was issued in 1915 by William Rider and Son, of London, and anyone interested in the man could not do better than to read this book

which is so interesting from many viewpoints. In connection with Paracelsus one might add that Robert Browning, in 1833, wrote a poem about him, and there is a charming little play in verse by Arthur Schnitzler.

Among the already large list of books devoted to the medical knowledge of Shakespeare is one by John W. Wainwright, published by the author in New York in 1907 and entitled "The Medical and Surgical Knowledge of William Shakespeare." The volume also contains a very good photogravure, made from the photograph of a portrait that was purchased by Mr. H. C. Clements in 1840. It is supposed to be, and probably is, the original portrait of Shakespeare from which the Droeshout engraving was made and inserted in the first collected edition of his works, published in 1623. The picture was painted seven years before Shakespeare's death, or fourteen years before the engraving was published. The portrait is now in the Memorial Picture Gallery at Stratford. The collection which Dr. Wainwright has made consists of quotations from the various plays grouped under the headings of medicine, surgery, mental and nervous diseases, etc., including those relating to hygiene and dietetics, to ethics and medical jurisprudence, and wherever any explanation is needed there is a note explaining the quoted passage. Curiously enough in the section on dietetics Dr. Wainwright seems to have passed over the advice

> "Make less the body hence, and more thy grace.
> Leave gormandizing; know the grave doth gape
> For thee thrice wider than for other men."

Many who are interested in Shakespeare cannot but find this volume a very interesting contribution. There have of course been some studies made, the most important of which are the Chesney's Shakespeare as a Physician, which was published in 1884; Moyes, Medicine and kindred arts in the plays of Shakespeare, Glasgow, 1896; Gillespie, Medical notes about Shakespeare and his times, Edinburgh, 1875; Thomson's and Bacon's Shakespeare on vivisection, in reply to Dean Plumptre, Melbourne, 1881.

Contributions have also been made by continental students, Ziino publishng a psychological and judicial study, Messina, 1897; Onimus, A Work on the Psychology of the Dramas of Shakespeare, Paris, 1876; Laehr, A work on Shakespeare, presentation of various mental derangements, Stuttgart, 1898; Bucknill's Medical knowledge of Shakespeare, London, 1860; Stearns, Shakespeare's medical knowledge, New York, 1865.

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